

Thank you for listening, and happy New Year.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on December 28 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Appointment of Representative Roger F. Wicker as United States Senator for Mississippi

December 31, 2007

Today Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour announced the appointment of Representative Roger Wicker to serve as United States Senator for the State of Mississippi, succeeding Senator Trent Lott.

I welcome Representative Wicker's appointment and commend Governor Barbour for the selection. Representative Wicker's leadership has earned the respect of his constituents and his colleagues in the House of Representatives. He is an advocate for our men and women in uniform and a champion of modernizing our health care system, and he shares Senator Lott's commitment to promote the interests of the people of Mississippi.

I look forward to working with Roger in his new role representing Mississippi in the United States Senate.

Statement on Signing the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007

December 31, 2007

Today, I have signed into law S. 2271, the "Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007." I share the deep concern of the Congress over the continued violence in Darfur perpetrated by the Government of Sudan and rebel groups. My Administration will continue its efforts to bring about significant improvements in the conditions in Sudan through sanctions against the Government of Sudan and high-level diplomatic en-

gagement and by supporting the deployment of peacekeepers in Darfur.

This Act purports to authorize State and local governments to divest from companies doing business in named sectors in Sudan and thus risks being interpreted as insulating from Federal oversight State and local divestment actions that could interfere with implementation of national foreign policy. However, as the Constitution vests the exclusive authority to conduct foreign relations with the Federal Government, the executive branch shall construe and enforce this legislation in a manner that does not conflict with that authority.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 31, 2007.

NOTE: S. 2271, approved December 31, was assigned Public Law No. 110-174.

Message on the Observance of New Year's Day, 2008

December 31, 2007

As we enter this New Year, we reflect on the past and look forward to a promising year ahead.

A future of hope and opportunity begins with a robust economy. Thanks to America's workers and entrepreneurs, our economy grew at a vigorous rate last year. Keeping taxes low and exercising fiscal restraint helped ensure that the number of jobs increased and the deficit once again fell ahead of schedule. The underpinnings of our economy have proven strong, competitive, and resilient enough to overcome the challenges we face. In the coming year, we will continue to encourage growth in the economy so Americans have more money to invest in their businesses, spend on their families, and put aside for the future.

In addition to our efforts here at home, the United States continued its work to spread freedom and peace around the world. America is determined to defeat terrorists and extremists, and we will remain on the offensive against the enemies of freedom. In 2008, we will continue to stand beside our partners in the international community to

lay a foundation of peace for our children and grandchildren.

America is grateful for the service and sacrifice of our Nation's troops and their families. During this hopeful time of year, we remain mindful of the courage and resolve of the fine men and women who protect our country and defend freedom's cause.

As we welcome this New Year, we move forward with trust in the power of the American spirit, confidence in our purpose, and faith in a loving God who created us to be free.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a happy New Year. May God bless you, may God bless our troops and their families, and may God bless America.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks on Departure From Waco, Texas

January 1, 2008

The President. Laura and I wish our fellow Americans a happy and healthy 2008. I particularly want to say something to our troops and their families: This country respects you; we admire you; and we wish you a great 2008 as well.

We've just come off the ranch; had a good rest and good New Year's with some friends. And I'm looking forward to getting back to Washington to work on policies to keep this country safe and to keep this country prosperous.

I just wanted to stop by and wish everybody a happy 2008. Thank you.

The First Lady. Happy New Year, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. at Texas State Technical College. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the President's Working Group on Financial Markets

January 4, 2008

I just had a fascinating and productive meeting with the President's Working Group on Financial Markets, chaired by Secretary Paulson. I want to thank the members for working diligently to monitor our capital market system, our financial system. And while there is some uncertainty, the report is, is that the financial markets are strong and solid. And I want to thank you for being diligent.

This economy of ours is on a solid foundation, but we can't take economic growth for granted. And there are signs that will cause us to be ever more diligent and to make sure that good policies come out of Washington. For example, we've had 52 straight months of job creation, but job growth slowed last month. The core inflation is low, but U.S. consumers are paying more for gasoline and for food. The consumer spending is strong, yet the values on many of the homes in America are beginning to decline and—which leads me to say to the American people: For those of you who are paying more and are worried about your home, we understand that. That's why we have an aggressive policy to help creditworthy people stay in their homes.

The Congress and the President have got to work together when they come back to, one, make sure taxes remain low. If there are—if the foundation is strong yet indicators are mixed, the worst thing that Congress could do is raise taxes on the American people and on American businesses. Secondly, we have got to understand that if we are worried about gasoline prices, we ought to expand refineries here in the United States, and we ought to explore for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways in the United States. As I mentioned, the Secretary and Secretary Jackson are leading an initiative on housing called HOPE NOW, but there's legislation that can be passed to make it easier for people to refinance their homes.

And so when Congress comes back, I look forward to working with them to deal with the economic realities of the moment and